



QUARTERLY REPORT

WELCOME TO THE ORGANIC FOOD PROGRAM QUARTERLY REPORT

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Calendar of Events

Training Workshops for Writing Value Added Grants

- April 7 Mt. Vernon
- April 13 Olympia
- April 14 Toppenish
- April 20 Spokane
- April 21 Kennewick
- April 22 E. Wenatchee

Contact any Rural Development Office for more info:

Mt. Vernon: 360-428-4322
Wenatchee: 509-924-7350
Spokane: 509-924-7350
Olympia: 360-704-7724
Yakima: 509-454-5743

The Organic Food Program has long sought a venue for keeping our certified growers, processors and handlers informed of current events, changes to organic standards, and other useful information. The intention of the Quarterly Report is to provide you with information you will need to maintain organic certification and articles you may find of interest.

There will be several sections to the Quarterly Report which we hope will address the diversity of operators we represent: the local market gardener, export farmers, and both large and small processors and handlers. You can count on the Quarterly Report for keeping you up-to-date with program hap-



penings, such as the status of our IFOAM application (see page 4), clarification on other relevant standards, and upcoming events (see column to the left and page 3). Please contact us if you have an event to post or if you have questions or suggestions for future topics. Please e-mail all correspondence either to Rachael Jamison at rjamison@agr.wa.gov or Katherine Lange at klange@agr.wa.gov.

HOW TO MEET EU STANDARDS ON MANURE AND LABOR

Many farmers who export products to the European Union (EU) have asked for clarification on EU requirements under the WSDA European Organic Verification Program (EOVP). This section will offer clarification on the EOVP manure and labor requirements.

Manure—The EU organic standards restrict the use of manure from factory farms. US certification agencies (CCOF, QAI, Oregon Tilth and WSDA) have agreed that this restriction pertains only to caged poultry operations. Therefore, uncomposted chicken manure from caged birds is prohibited under the EU organic program. Composted chicken manure is allowed under the EU organic standards. In addition, products that contain chicken manure and that are listed as approved on the WSDA Brand Name Material List are allowed under the EU program. Please have documentation available during your inspection that verifies chicken manure did not come from caged poultry operations.

Social Justice—The IFOAM Basic Standards require operators to have a social justice policy. If you employ more than ten persons, this policy must be in writing. The policy could include items that you already maintain as required by state and federal law. The policy could include records that demonstrate that workers have received safety training, payroll records that demonstrate that workers are being paid the minimum wage, and the posting of health, wage and safety information. Please have these records available at the time of your inspection.

By Rachael Jamison, Organic Food Program Export Specialist. Contact at rjamison@agr.wa.gov

**Inspector's****Corner**

If you have questions regarding organic certification, materials or inspections, the following list will help you contact the correct person in the Olympia office or in the field:

Christa Bemis, receptionist
(360) 902-1805
Brenda Book, processor/handler coordinator, exports
(360) 902-2090
Richard Carr, inspector
(360) 561-2404
Jeff Collins, inspector
(509) 682-8457
Les Eklund, inspector supervisor
(360) 902-1891
Mike Haskett, inspector
(509) 225-2612
Rachael Jamison, inspector, document review, exports
(360) 902-1951
Katherine Lange, inspector, document review, materials
(360) 902-1877
Miles McEvoy, program manager
(360) 902-1924
John Morrison, inspector
(509) 979-7397
Jennifer Watson, program secretary
(360) 902-1885

We will continue to offer the "Inspector's Corner" in each Quarterly Report. If you have questions for the inspectors regarding issues of compliance and inspection procedures, we encourage you to call or email them to the Organic Food Program.

News Briefs

03/08/04—USDA is requesting nominations to fill five upcoming vacancies on the National Organic Standards Board. Written submissions must be received by June 14, 2004. Details can be found at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/nosb/>

TEMPORARY PERMITS FOR ON-FARM SLAUGHTERING OF PASTURED POULTRY

The Washington State Legislature has proposed to adopt a rule which could significantly benefit small organic poultry producers. The rule



would allow farmers who produce less than 1000 birds and who sell direct to consumers to slaughter their own chickens on-site (Chapter 16-170 WAC). The tentative adoption date of the rule is April 5, 2004 with an effective date scheduled for May 6, 2004.

The rule will require that farmers obtain a permit to conduct the on-site slaughtering of their chickens. Permits will cost \$75.00 and require that a complete ap-

plication be submitted 6 weeks prior to the first scheduled slaughter. An inspection must be conducted by a WSDA food safety representative prior to the issuance of a permit.

Certified organic poultry producers who wish to take advantage of this rule, pending its adoption, and sell their farm-slaughtered poultry as "organic" must also apply to the Organic Food Program as an organic food processor. There is no additional fee for this certification if you are processing your own chickens. Organic Processing Applications are available upon request from

the Organic Food Program by calling (360) 902-1805 or email at organic@agr.wa.gov.

For more information on Chapter 16-170 WAC and the temporary permit for slaughter of pastured chickens, please contact Jim Pressley, Assistant Program Manager for Food Safety at (360) 902-1860 or email at jpressley@agr.wa.gov.

By Richard Carr, Organic Food Program Inspector. rcarr@agr.wa.gov

BIO FACH 2004

In mid-February, I traveled to Nuremberg, Germany to attend Biofach 2004, the largest organic trade show, and associated meetings. The purpose of the trip was to ensure that the Organic Food Program was providing adequate verification of compliance to EU standards in order to maintain market access for Washington grown organic food products. USDA Specialty Crops

Funds, the Washington Apple Commission and the Pear Bureau Northwest provided funding for the trip.

I participated in numerous meetings including the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) Accredited Certification Bodies meeting, IFOAM Social Justice meeting, IFOAM Organic Guarantee System, Euro-

gap and the NOP for European Certifiers.

The Organic Food Program is continuing to work to bridge the gap between EU standards and the NOP by participating in important conversations with international governmental and private certification bodies.

By Miles McEvoy, Organic Food Program Manager. Contact at mmcevoy@agr.wa.gov

SOIL CONDITIONING INDEX

The National Organic Program 205.202 requires that organic producers appropriately manage crop nutrients and soil quality. To verify that producers have implemented practices that maintain or improve soil quality, the Organic Food Program has sought to identify and implement a process to meet

this need. The Soil Conditioning Index (SCI), a predictive, multi-layered Excel program, has been previously used by the Natural Resources Conservation Service to perform on-site farm evaluations regarding soil quality parameters. The Organic Food Program has engaged in a plan to implement the SCI. Con-

versations with agronomists from the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Organic Food Program staff have agreed to put forth efforts to establish a training schedule for OFP inspectors. This will give inspection staff a quantitative tool to measure soil quality on organic farming operations.

By John Morrison, Organic Food Program Inspector. Contact jmorrison@agr.wa.gov

European Organic Verification Program Workshops

The WSDA-OFP will be conducting workshops for organic producers, processors, handlers and other interested parties on the 2004 European Organic Verification Program (EOVP). Topics addressed will include EOVP additional requirements, inspection and certification process, and an update on the European market. Workshops will be held at the following locations and times:

Thursday, April 8, 2004

WSU Tree Fruit Research Station - Large Conference Room
1100 North Western Avenue
Wenatchee, WA
1-3PM

Parking on the street.

Friday, April 9, 2004

Washington State Fruit Commission - 1st Floor Meeting Room
105 S. 18th Street
Yakima, WA
10-12 noon

For more information contact Rachael Jamison at (360) 902-1951 or email rjamison@agr.wa.gov.

SALAD GREENS

With the onset of spring, many producers are busy planting lettuce and salad greens for early harvest and sale at local farmer's markets and produce stands. Last year, questions arose about whether or not producers selling packaged salad greens needed to be licensed with the WSDA Food Safety Program as a processor. The following are general guidelines to help you determine whether your salad green business requires this license:

Processing License Required

- **Mixing**—Salad greens that are grown separately but mixed together by the producer and offered for sale.
- **Cutting**—Salad greens that are cut or chopped and offered for sale.
- **Ready to Eat**—Salad greens that are packaged and advertised or presented as 'ready to eat.'

NOTE: "Food Processing" means the handling or processing of food in any manner in preparation for sale for human consumption: PROVIDED, That it shall not include fresh fruit or vegetables merely washed or trimmed while being prepared or packaged for sale in their natural state.

Processing License Not Required

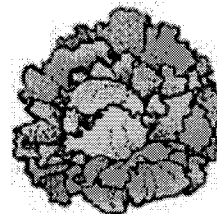
- **Wash Before Eating**—Packaged whole, uncut salad greens that are put in packaging with clear labeling that indicates the product must be washed before eating.
- **Whole Leaf and Plant**—Salad greens with the whole leaf or plant harvested at ground level with no further cutting, chopping, or mixing.
- **Mixed Seeds**—Mixed greens that are planted together and not presented as 'ready to eat.' In this situation the seeds are mixed together and therefore the harvested greens are grown

mixed.

On February 5, 2004, the Federal Food & Drug Administration (FDA) sent letters to firms that grow, pack, or ship fresh lettuce concerning food-borne illness outbreaks related to consumption of fresh lettuce. This FDA letter and guidance information on minimizing food safety hazards can be found at <http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/prodltr.html>.

If you have questions, concerns, or would like to obtain a Food Safety application packet, you may contact Denise Curette (Food Safety) at (360) 902-1876 or Brenda Book (Organic Food Program) at (360) 902-2092 or visit our website at <http://agr.wa.gov/>.

By Brenda Book, processor/handler review coordinator. Contact at bbook@agr.wa.gov.



Mission Statement

The WSDA Organic Food Program protects consumers and supports the organic food industry by ensuring the integrity of organic food products. The program certifies organic producers and handlers to US National Organic Standards and enforces organic standards in Washington State. The program supports the development of export markets by providing certification to foreign organic standards.



IFOAM ACCREDITATION UPDATE

The mission of IFOAM (International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements) is leading, uniting and assisting the organic movement in its full diversity. IFOAM's goal is the worldwide adoption of ecologically, socially and economically sound agricultural systems that are based on the Principles of Organic Agriculture. IFOAM consists of over 720 member organizations in approximately 100 countries worldwide. IFOAM has developed the Organic Guarantee System to unite the organic world through a common system of standards, verification and



market identity. The Organic Guarantee System provides IFOAM accreditation to the IFOAM Basic Standards and IFOAM Accreditation Criteria. The International Organic Accreditation Services (IOAS) is contracted to run the IFOAM Accreditation Program.

The WSDA Organic Food Program applied for IFOAM accreditation in June 2003. Funding for the IFOAM accreditation is provided by USDA Specialty

Crop Funds, the Washington Apple Commission and the Pear Bureau Northwest. Over the last six months, WSDA has addressed a number of items identified by IOAS as non-compliant with IFOAM Standards. WSDA is now scheduled for an IOAS site audit between March 29 and April 6, 2004. Full IFOAM accreditation is scheduled for later this year.

By Miles McEvoy, Organic Food Program Manager. Mmcevoy@agr.wa.gov

